March 6, 2020

Dear UW-River Falls Students:

UW-River Falls is at all times committed to ensuring the health and safety of our students and employees. This is especially the case now as we address concerns related to the ways that the new coronavirus and the disease it causes, COVID-19, could impact our campus. The situation is complex and rapidly evolving and I know you have already received some communications from Student Health and Counseling over the past few weeks.

I am writing personally to be sure you are aware that we are taking proactive steps to keep you and our entire community safe. You are invited to visit the dedicated webpage regularly where you can find copies of all past communications as well as links to the main guidance: UWRF Coronavirus Information.

Here is a summary of our preparatory actions and some recent decisions.

**UWRF Emergency Operations Center (EOC):** this group of campus leaders has been meeting regularly since the initial outbreak. They have made sure that all of our emergency and pandemic plans are up to date in the event that we need to use them. Our EOC is working very closely with local public health departments on all of these steps as well.

**Travel:** we are following Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) and federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations regarding university travel and study abroad.

- All students, faculty and staff currently on approved study abroad programs have been contacted and informed of the latest guidance.
- Spring Break education abroad courses are currently scheduled as planned, however, the university will continue to monitor the situation. We will make appropriate decisions on upcoming education abroad courses as needed.
- Currently, the CDC is recommending that travelers coming to the U.S. from countries with a CDC Level 3 Travel Health Notice related to this coronavirus voluntarily self-quarantine and self-monitor for 14 days and that those returning from a Level 2 country self-monitor and limit interactions with others for 14 days upon arrival in the U.S.
- If you have personal travel plans coming up, please maintain awareness of the situation nationally and internationally. Please note:
  - Cases of COVID-19 are increasingly being identified in locations around the world and across the U.S. Exposure to the virus is no longer strictly limited to travel to certain foreign countries.
  - Concerns over the possible spread of COVID-19 in large groups have resulted in numerous cancellations of conferences and events in the U.S.
  - If you have traveled, especially to an area where COVID-19 is widespread, and you become ill (such as fever, cough and/or difficulty breathing), definitely seek medical advice but call ahead before going to a doctor’s office or emergency room to tell them about your recent travel.
**Risk and prevention:** your risk for contracting COVID-19 in the U.S. is still very low, with influenza still posing a greater risk. Preventive *wellness efforts* are the best way to avoid viruses. These include:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing and before eating.
- Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stay home when you are sick (please inform your instructors).
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a household cleaning spray or wipe that kills viruses such as influenza and coronavirus.

**Health services:** UWRF students can learn about what services they have access to at the Vibrant Health Family Clinic in River Falls on the [Student Health and Counseling](#) webpage.

Please also remember that UW-River Falls strongly discourages any form of bias or discrimination. If you feel as though you are being discriminated against or harassed due to concerns around this or any issue, you are encouraged to file a report with the Bias Incident Response Team using the form on the [Report It!](#) webpage.

Please continue to watch your UWRF email for updates. Thank you for all you are doing to help keep yourself and our campus community healthy.

Sincerely,

Dean

Dean Van Galen, Ph.D.
Chancellor
University of Wisconsin-River Falls
715.425.3201
[www.uwrf.edu](http://www.uwrf.edu)